

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application and claims in light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 9 and 10 have been amended to place them in better form. No new matter is added. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, at Fig. 2 and paragraphs [0018] and [0030] of the publication of the present specification, U.S. Publication No. 2007/0080222.

Claim 2 was previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Claims 1 and 3-12 are currently pending.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,931,622 to Ohtsuki et al. ("Ohtsuki") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,241,545 to Bricaud et al. ("Bricaud"). This rejection is respectfully traversed:

Independent claims 1 and 9 as amended herein recite that "the card support surface extends with the card end surface in a horizontal direction and has an area enough to arrange a plurality of cards and to slide a selected one of the plurality of cards while abutting the card against the card end surface, and the card end surface extends on both sides of the input and output executing unit so that the card sliding on the card support surface is allowed to pass through the input and output executing unit." According to an instruction given to the player of the game, the player may select one of the plurality of cards arranged on the card support surface and slide it quickly and easily against the card end surface to proceed with the game. See paragraph [0029] of the publication of the present specification, U.S. Publication No. 2007/0080222. With such a configuration, "the game machine . . . can read information on a lot of cards in a limited period of time and give various

changes to the content of a game.” See paragraph [0014] of the publication of the present specification, U.S. Publication No. 2007/0080222. Accordingly, the game may be played at a quick pace by allowing a player to quickly select one of a plurality of cards from the card support surface and smoothly slide it along a card end surface, which extends with the card support surface, to the input and output executing unit. It is respectfully submitted that Ohtsuki and Bricaud, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest this feature.

By contrast, the cardholder 15 of Ohtsuki is configured to receive only one card 16 in containment and does not include a support surface for a plurality of cards. See Ohtsuki, Figures 3a. While the card 16 is inserted, it is pressed upwards by the card guide 21, biased by spring 31, opposite an abutting portion 57. See Ohtsuki, Figure 3b and col. 4, lines 10-14 and 20-21. Since the card guide 21 presses the card 16 away from the card holder 15 until the card 16 has been fully received into the device (at which point the card 16 can not be slid), the surface of the card holder 15, contrary to the Examiner’s contentions, is not a surface which supports the card as it is slid. See Ohtsuki, Figures 3a and 3b and Detailed Action, Page 3. Thus, even if the card guide 21 can be seen as a card support surface and the abutting portion 57 can be seen as a card end surface, they do not extend together in a horizontal direction as called for in claims 1 and 9. Moreover, the device of Ohtsuki is capable of receiving only one card at a time and does not provide or extend to a support surface for a plurality of cards as called for in claims 1 and 9.

Likewise, the device of Bricaud is configured to receive only a single card C into each of a plurality of receptacles 162 from which they can be read. See Bricaud, Fig. 25. Once a card C is received in its respective receptacle 162, the cover 92 may be closed in order to read the cards. See Bricaud, col. 8, lines 5-10. Thus, since the cover 92 must be flipped closed in order for the cards C to communicate with the device of Bricaud, the cards C are not slid while abutting a card end surface to allow data transfer. Moreover, like Ohtsuki, since each card C is fully retained in a receptacle 162, Bricaud likewise fails to disclose or suggest a support surface from which one of a plurality of cards can be selected as called for in claims 1 and 9. Similarly, both Ohtsuki and Bricaud therefore also fail to disclose or suggest a support surface on which a selected card may be slid to allow it to pass through an input and output executing unit, as called for in claims 1 and 9.

Since Ohtsuki and Bricaud, taken alone or in combination, at least fail to disclose or suggest a card support surface with area enough to arrange a plurality of cards and to slide a selected card thereon while abutting a card end surface to allow it to pass through an input and output executing unit, they can not render claims 1 or 9 obvious. Additionally, since claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3 and 4 are allowable for at least this reason. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ohtsuki and Bricaud is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuki in view of Bricaud and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 3,553,436 to Webb ("Webb"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Ohtsuki and Bricaud, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a card support surface to arrange a plurality of cards and slide a selected one of the cards while abutting a card end surface to allow it to pass through an input and output executing unit as presently called for in claim 1. Webb likewise fails to disclose or suggest such a feature since Webb merely describes a static card reader, into which perforated cards are inserted by hand. See Webb, col. 10, lines 63-64. Since claim 5 depends from claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 is allowable for at least this reason. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ohtsuki, Bricaud and Webb is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 6, 7 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuki in view of Bricaud and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,596,668 to Berbeco ("Berbeco"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Ohtsuki and Bricaud, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a card support surface to arrange a plurality of cards and slide a selected one of the cards while abutting a card end surface to allow it to pass through an input and output executing unit as presently called for in claim 1. Similarly, independent claim 10 recites that an input and output executing unit executes on a card sliding across a card support

surface that “extends with the card end surface in a horizontal direction and has an area enough to arrange a plurality of cards and to slide a selected one of the plurality of cards while abutting the card against the card end surface.” Berbeco likewise fails to disclose or suggest such a feature; rather, Berbeco is directed to a coating for floors. See Berbeco, Abstract. Since claims 6 and 7 depend from claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 6 and 7 are allowable for at least this reason. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6, 7 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ohtsuki, Bricaud and Berbeco is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 8 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuki in view of Bricaud and Berbeco and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,098,889 to Ogawa et al. (“Ogawa”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Ohtsuki, Bricaud and Berbeco, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a card support surface to arrange a plurality of cards and slide a selected one of the cards while abutting a card end surface to allow it to pass through an input and output executing unit as called for in claims 1 and 10. Ogawa likewise fails to disclose or suggest such a feature; rather, Ogawa merely describes a multi-layered recording medium and is silent as to any form of support surface. See Ogawa, Abstract and col. 3, lines 4-13. Since claims 8 and 11 depend from claims 1 and 10, respectively, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 8 and 11 are allowable for at least this reason. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ohtsuki, Bricaud, Berbeco and Ogawa is therefore respectfully requested.


CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and arguments, the subsisting claims in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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